



YoungStar

Frequently Asked Questions: Day Camps

February 5, 2016

Note: Almost all questions have been revised since June 10, 2013; questions that have been substantially revised or added since the last update are highlighted.

YoungStar is a 5 Star quality rating and improvement system that supports child care and school-age care providers in the areas of education, learning environment & curriculum, business & professional practices and the health & well-being of children. Through this rating system the state addresses several key issues in Wisconsin's child care system. YoungStar:

- Focuses on improving outcomes for children by improving the overall quality of care
- Creates multiple pathways to professional development opportunities and better quality for child care and school-age programs
- Creates a clear, understandable tool for parents to choose quality child care
- Creates incentives and provides support for programs to improve services, particularly for low-income children
- Improves accountability for the Wisconsin Shares system

Questions: Day Camps

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Answers: Day Camps

CAMP-1. Is participation in YoungStar required of licensed day camps?

Licensed Day Camps enrolling children for 14 weeks or fewer are now included in YoungStar! DCF worked with stakeholders¹ to develop evaluation criteria that address the unique service delivery of day camps. These evaluation criteria include a scale of points that use the same broad categories already established for YoungStar, but with customization for a day camp's unique characteristics. Find the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* at:

http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/evaluation_criteria/2016_eval_criteria/2016-ys-evaluation-criteria-daycamp.pdf

Licensed day camp programs that accept Wisconsin Shares payments *are required* to participate. Participation in YoungStar is voluntary for programs that do *not* currently serve families receiving Wisconsin Shares. However, programs voluntarily participating in YoungStar are required to sign an agreement indicating they are willing to accept families receiving Wisconsin Shares as openings become available in the future.

[*Note.* Licensed Day Camps that have children enrolled for *more than 14 weeks per year* will be rated under the existing *School-Age* rating track.]

To apply to YoungStar, your day camp program must complete and submit a YoungStar Contract. This application is available on the DCF website at:

<http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers.htm>.

After completing your YoungStar Contract, you would then submit your contract to your local YoungStar office. To find the local YoungStar office in your area, go to the YoungStar website at:

<http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/localoffice.htm>.

The local YoungStar office will process your application and assign a Technical Consultant to your program, if requested. The Technical Consultant will guide your program through the process of getting training and technical assistance and then the program will complete a YoungStar rating.

CAMP-2. My day camp program is operated by a public school district and is therefore exempt from licensing requirements. Can my program participate in YoungStar and receive Wisconsin Shares funding?

Programs that are operated by public school boards are not eligible to be rated as day camps. Only Licensed Day Camps enrolling children for 14 weeks or fewer are eligible for this type of rating. Programs operated by public school boards are eligible to be rated in Track 2 (group programs) or Track 3 (school-age programs).

CAMP-3. How do day camps earn star ratings?

Because the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* are for licensed day camps with an operating timeframe of 14 weeks or fewer, a Formal Rating with Observation cannot be completed. Therefore, programs going through the YoungStar rating in the Day Camp track can earn up to 3 Stars. See the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* at:

http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/evaluation_criteria/2016_eval_criteria/2016-ys-evaluation-criteria-daycamp.pdf

¹ The stakeholders DCF worked with to develop the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* include YMCAs, Wisconsin Youth Company, Treehouse Summer Day Camp, Supporting Families Together Association, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, and DCF's Child Care Licensing Program.

If a licensed day camp wants to earn a star level higher than 3 Stars, the camp would need to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA, at <http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation>). The ACA's standards are linked to quality day camp programming similar to the standards required in YoungStar. Licensed day camps are encouraged to contact their local YoungStar office (<http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/localoffice.htm>) for more information.

CAMP-4. If my organization runs more than one day camp, is each camp rated separately?

Yes. Multi-site programs with separate licenses and/or Location Numbers receive independent ratings. If you are the Camp Director for more than one site, your educational qualifications can only count toward points for one site.

CAMP-5. What happens if a Counselor leaves a program and begins working at a new program?

Any staff member who leaves a program and begins working at a new program can make employment changes in her or his *Individual Profile* on The Registry. The staff member must indicate an end date for the initial program and then can add the new employer to her or his Individual Profile. This allows the new program to assign the staff member to its *Program Profile*.

Program Profiles must be updated ***immediately*** anytime a staff change occurs in order to reflect the absence of staff from a position, as well as to reflect newly hired staff.

CAMP-6. What job titles are equivalent to a Lead Teacher and a Director in a day camp program?

Counselor and Camp Director are equivalent titles, respectively. The Camp Director may also be called the Coordinator, Administrator, or simply Director.

The responsibilities assumed by the personnel determine the qualifications required:

- Counselor – responsibilities include supervision and guidance of a group of children in the program, under the direction of a Camp Director. Counselors assist in daily planning and implementation of activities, communicating with families, and relating to the community.
- Camp Director – responsibilities include the overall direction and daily operation of the program. This position develops the mission, philosophy, goals, and policies, and is held responsible for program planning and evaluation, administration (including fiscal management), and organizational development (including management of human resources).

CAMP-7. Is the person designated as the Camp Director someone who has to be on-site at all times?

For the purposes of YoungStar, the person who is designated as the Camp Director shall be on-site for at least 50% of the total number of hours s/he works for the program and shall have the following responsibilities:

- Supervision of the planning and implementation of the programming for children;
- Supervision of the staff at the site;
- Staff meetings and orientation; and
- Continuing education for the staff.

It is up to the day camp program to determine who is charged with completing these responsibilities and to identify that person as “Director” in its Registry Program Profile. YoungStar Technical Consultants are *not* responsible for verifying that the person listed as the Director is on-site for a set number of hours per week/month/year.

Staff can only be assigned to *one* day camp program at a time as a Counselor, as a Camp Director, or in a dual role as both Counselor and Camp Director. For more information about staff members serving dual roles, see the next question.

CAMP-8. Can a person be counted as BOTH a Camp Director AND a Counselor in a program?

Day camp sites licensed for *50 children or fewer* may, in the following limited circumstances, have a Camp Director who also is listed as a Counselor in the Program Profile:

To be eligible to earn 3 Stars: The person in the dual role has 50% of the time the program is open devoted to the responsibilities of the Camp Director, AND child-to-staff ratios must follow licensing requirements for licensed group centers. For example, if the program is open 40 hours per week, the person in the dual-role would have to be in the Camp Director role for 20 hours per week. The dual-role Camp Director must also meet the educational qualifications for a 3 Star rating.

Note: To be eligible to earn 4 or 5 Stars, day camp programs must be accredited by the American Camp Association (<http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation>).

If a person is serving in a dual role as both Counselor and Camp Director in one program, YoungStar Technical Consultants are responsible for verifying that the person serving in the dual role has the appropriate allocation of teaching vs. administrative time as prescribed in the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* at:

http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/evaluation_criteria_daycamp_2014.pdf

CAMP-9. Who is the Counselor when two people share a group?

If two Counselors work with the same group within a program, the Counselor with the greatest number of work hours per week at the program should be listed on the Program Profile as the Counselor for YoungStar educational qualifications.

If the Counselors work exactly the same number of hours per week, the program can choose which individual will be the YoungStar Counselor. When making this choice, it is in the best interests of the program to consider not only the individuals’ educational qualifications (reflected through a Registry Career Level), but also the additional training in regard to possible points in YoungStar (training in the School-Age Curricular Framework, WI Pyramid Model, Strengthening Families, etc.).

CAMP-10. How is the education of a Counselor counted if s/he works in more than one program or with more than one group?

A Counselor cannot use educational qualifications for more than one program or more than one group at a time. If a Counselor works with more than one group within a single program, the group with whom the Counselor spends the most time is the group that should be attached to that Counselor in The Registry Program Profile.

Note: “Groups” are different from “activity stations.” One group of children can participate in multiple activity stations, as long as licensing ratios and maximum group size requirements are satisfied. For children 6 years of age and older, the staff-to-child ratio must be at least 1 staff member for every 18 children, with a maximum group size of 36 children. As an example, if five Counselors are in charge of five activity stations, and if 20 ten-year-old children rotate among the stations and Counselors, the day camp’s Program Profile would consider these 20 children as *one group*. This is because the number of groups listed by the day camp should be in keeping with required licensing ratios, and in this example 20 children is less than the maximum size of 36, and the staff-to-child ratio is greater than 1:18. Then, out of the five Counselors, the Counselor who is attached to this group in The Registry Program Profile is the Counselor who spends the most time with this group.

CAMP-11. For day camp staff, do Counselor/Camp Director qualifications need to be in early childhood?

No. Credit, credentials, and degrees for Counselors and Camp Directors must be related to the age group served as determined by The Registry.

CAMP-12. How is curriculum planned and delivered in day camps, and how does assessment occur?

Day camp programs use a curriculum aligned with the School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF) or the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS). This means the SACF or WMELS is implemented for the curriculum/programming for all children in all groups.

Specific training has been created by the Wisconsin Afterschool Network for the School-Age Curricular Framework. This training covers developmentally appropriate practice and standards for serving children in school-age programs and will therefore most likely be useful for day camp programs. The training also includes information about selecting curriculum as well as program and child assessment resources specifically developed for school-age children.

Information about the School-Age Curricular Framework, as well as other useful resources, can be found at:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/schoolage.htm>

<http://www.wiafterschoolnetwork.org/>

CAMP-13. Do day camp programs that operate for only part of the day receive points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?

Yes. When a provider chooses a Technical Rating (day camps are NOT eligible for Formal Ratings with Observation), on-site observations are completed at each individual program, including programs that are part-day. Activities and indicators outlined in YoungStar (such as 60 minutes of physical activity) are prorated to fit a shorter-day schedule.

If the operating hours vary during the week, a Consultant will use the average number of hours per day to award points for items like this.

CAMP-14. What does “regular attendance” in day camp programs mean?

The definition of “regular attendance” depends on the number of hours a week a program is open, as follows:

- If the program is open 40 hours per week or fewer, to be in “regular attendance” means that the child attends the program 50% or more of the hours the program is open for that child’s age group. For example, if a program is open 25 hours per week, the “child in regular attendance” would attend 12.5 hours or more per week.
- If the program is open more than 40 hours per week, to be “in regular attendance” means a child attends 20 hours per week or more. For example, if the program is open for 45 hours per week, the “child in regular attendance” definition would be 20 hours or more per week.

YoungStar recognizes that some day camp programs have different operating schedules based on the time of year, and when operating schedules change, these same rules apply. For example, if the program were to adjust its hours to being open for 40 hours per week in the summer, children considered to be in regular attendance in the summer would be those attending 20 hours or more per week.

In most cases, YoungStar quality indicators apply to the entire program and hence to all the children in the program. However, some YoungStar quality indicators may have exceptions for children who are not in regular attendance. If the quality indicator has an exception for children who are not in regular attendance, this is clearly stated.